

INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE  
Appendix C - Emergency Response And Incident, Hazard, and Accident Reporting

APPENDIX C - EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND INCIDENT, HAZARD, AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

- I. **Introduction.** Time is an extremely critical factor in responding to overdue, missing, or crashed aircraft. Personnel responsible for aircraft flight following cannot justify any delay in initiating emergency response procedures based on the possibility that a Pilot or Helicopter Manager has forgotten to perform a check-in. Immediate positive action is necessary: the longer the delay in locating the overdue or missing aircraft, the less chance the occupants have to survive an accident.



**"SOMEONE'S LIFE MAY DEPEND ON YOUR ACTIONS."**

II. **Emergency Response Preparedness Plan.**

- A. **Local Unit Responsibility.** Each local dispatch or other flight following office should have an Aircraft Accident Preparedness Plan or Aircraft Crash, Search and Rescue Guide. Information in this plan or guide on emergency response procedures should be pre-completed in the event of a mishap.
1. **Purpose.** The purpose of the plan is to establish standard emergency response procedures that local line officers will follow in all cases once an aircraft meets applicable criteria of "Overdue," "Missing," or "Crashed" (see Glossary).
  2. **Applicability.** The plan will be used in situations where an aircraft meets overdue, missing, or crashed criteria.
  3. **Contents.** Emergency response plans and guides may be formatted in a variety of ways, provided the user (that is, the individual making the initial response to the emergency) can easily reference the appropriate situation and then follow a generic checklist of actions to be taken for that situation.
- B. **Helibase Manager Responsibility.** Upon arrival at an incident or prior to commencement of a project, the Helibase Manager should acquire information from the unit's emergency response plan and complete Form HBM-11, Helibase Emergency Rescue Plan. See Appendix B for further information. Refer also to Chapter 12, Fire Protection And Crash-Rescue, and Chapter 17, Search And Rescue Operations.

III. **Emergency Response Procedures.**

A "Mayday Call" indicates that the Pilot of an aircraft is experiencing an in-flight emergency. The Dispatcher or Aircraft Base Radio Operator must listen closely, since the Pilot may be relaying location information essential to dispatch of rescue services.

For this reason, a Dispatcher or Base Radio Operator must always be on duty at the radio during mission-type flights. Helicopter personnel should also closely and continuously

## INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE

### Appendix C - Emergency Response And Incident, Hazard, and Accident Reporting

track the aircraft's location so that accurate location information can be relayed in an emergency. Form HBM-9, Helibase Flight Following Log, accomplishes this tracking (see Appendix B). Refer to Chapter 4, Flight Following, Resource Tracking, And Communications, for further discussion and information.

After receiving a mayday call, the Radio Operator should attempt to contact the aircraft to determine the nature of the emergency. If the aircraft has landed safely and there is no need to order emergency services, then the responsible unit Aviation Manager or Helibase Manager should be contacted and appropriate action taken.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** During emergency situations involving an overdue, missing, or crashed aircraft, close coordination between the local unit dispatch office and the helibase is critical to the success of the search and rescue operation.

Chapter 12, Fire Protection And Crash-Rescue, contains specific procedural information on helibase emergency response procedures.

#### IV. Incident, Hazard, And Accident Reporting.

- A. **Definitions.** These definitions supplement those found in the Glossary. These may vary slightly among agencies, but are generally applicable to all agencies.
1. **Aviation Hazard.** An aviation hazard is any condition, act, or set of circumstances that compromise the safety of personnel engaged in aviation activities. These hazards may address, but are not limited to, such areas as:
    - # Deviations from policies, procedures, regulations and instructions as contained in Manual and Handbook Releases, Interim Directives, standard operating guides, etc.
    - # Hazardous materials handling and/or transport
    - # Flight following
    - # Deviation from planned operations, flight plan, type of use (for example, general to special-use)
    - # Failure to utilize PPE or ALSE
    - # Inadequate training, or failure to meet training requirements
    - # Failure to utilize load calculations and/or manifests correctly
    - # Weather conditions
    - # Ground operations
    - # Pilot procedures
    - # Fuel contamination
    - # Unsafe actions by Pilot, air crew, passengers, or support personnel.
  2. **Maintenance Deficiency.** A Maintenance Deficiency is a defect or failure causing mechanical difficulties encountered in aircraft operations, not specifically identified as an incident or aviation hazard.

## INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE

### Appendix C - Emergency Response And Incident, Hazard, and Accident Reporting

3. **Aircraft Incident.** An aircraft incident is an unplanned event that results in damage which is less than serious aircraft incident criteria, or injury less than medical attention. A situation involving an aircraft and/or personnel which has the potential of resulting in an accident is also classified as an aircraft incident. Note that the USDA-FS also has a classification of "Incident With Potential" to cause an accident. Examples of incidents are:
    - a. **Injury To Personnel.** Injury requiring only first aid.
    - b. **Damage To Aircraft.** Any damage less than significant (and less than accident criteria) when engines/rotors are turning and there is an intent to fly. When in doubt, respond to the occurrence as if it were an accident. The accident investigators will determine whether the occurrence is classified as an incident or accident.
    - c. **Forced Landing.** A landing necessitated by failure of engines, systems, or components which makes continued flight impossible, and which may or may not result in damage or injury.
    - d. **Precautionary Landing.** A landing necessitated by apparent impending failure of engines, systems, or components or incapacitation of the flight crew which makes continued flight inadvisable.
    - e. **Aircraft Ground Mishap.** A mishap in which there is no intent to fly; however, the power plants and/or rotors are in operation and damage incurred requiring replacement or repair of rotors, propellers, tires, wheels, wing tips, flaps, etc., or an injury is incurred requiring first aid.
    - f. **Ground Damage To Aircraft.** A mishap not specifically addressed as an incident above, where the aircraft or component incurs damage requiring repair or replacement before flight. Powerplants and/or rotors may or may not be in operation.
    - g. **Near Mid-Air Collision.** When airborne aircraft encroaches within 500 feet of another airborne aircraft, or a Pilot or crewmember determines that a collision hazard existed between two or more aircraft.
  4. **Accident.** The accident definition is lengthy and fairly technical. If in doubt as to whether the occurrence was an incident ("Damage To Aircraft") or an accident, treat it as an accident. The investigation team will make the final determination as to classification.
- B. **Procedure For Utilizing Agency Forms.** The agency with operational control of the aircraft at the time of the occurrence will complete a Safecom (incident/hazard form) and submit it through its agency channels. Utilize Form OAS-34 (FS5700-14) for DOI or USDA-FS incidents, and applicable state and local formats.

## INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE

### Appendix C - Emergency Response And Incident, Hazard, and Accident Reporting



Examples: BLM aircraft flying on USDA-Forest Service fire or project has an accident, or an incident, hazard or maintenance deficiency occurs. Either the BLM aircrew or USDA-FS employee observing the occurrence submits OAS-34 (FS 5700-14) Safecom Form through Forest Service channels.

NPS aircraft flying on BLM fire or project has an accident, or an incident, hazard or maintenance deficiency occurs. Either the NPS aircrew or BLM employee observing the occurrence submits OAS-34 (FS 5700-14) Safecom form.

1. **Safecom OAS-34 (FS 5700-14) Incident/Aviation Hazard/Maintenance Deficiency Report.** (See Exhibit C-1.)
  - a. **Purpose.** The purposes of the form are:
    - # To report any damage or injury less than accident criteria and any condition, act, observance, maintenance deficiency or circumstance which has potential to cause an aviation-related accident.
    - # To document all aviation hazards, incidents, incidents with potential, or accidents.
    - # To perform trend analyses for short- or long-term changes in policy and procedures, identify areas needing training, etc.;
    - # To establish accountability on the part of all aviation mission participants for meeting flight and employee safety objectives.
  - b. **Applicability.** The form is to be completed for any one of three occurrences: aircraft incident, maintenance deficiency, or aviation hazard.
  - c. **Responsibility and Requirements For Completion.** It is the responsibility of any individual (including contractors) who observes or who is involved in an aviation incident/hazard/maintenance deficiency to report the occurrence immediately to local aviation management staff. Local Aviation Manager is responsible for reviewing the report and forwarding it through agency channels.
  - d. **Instructions For Completion.** See Exhibit C-1. Completion is self-explanatory.
  - e. **Routing, Filing And/Or Action Necessary.**
    - (1) **Local Responsibility.** Within two (2) working days after an aircraft incident, aviation hazard, or maintenance deficiency, the local Aviation Manager or participant in the flight shall complete and submit Form OAS-34 Aircraft Incident/Aviation Hazard/Maintenance Deficiency Report. The report shall be

**INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE**  
**Appendix C - Emergency Response And Incident, Hazard, and Accident Reporting**

forwarded by express mail or telefax to the State, Area, or Regional Aviation Manager within three (3) working days after the occurrence.

Serious incidents with potential to cause an accident (eg, occurrences which meet "incident" criteria, and especially near mid-air collisions,) shall be reported immediately.

- (2) **State/Area/Regional Office Responsibility.** Incidents with serious potential excepted, the State/Area/Regional Aviation Manager shall, within five (5) working days after the occurrence of the incident/hazard, review, add comments as necessary, and forward the report to OAS and to the Bureau/Office Aviation Safety Manager.
2. **Safecom OAS-34 (FS 5700-14) Initial Report Of Incident Or Accident.** (See Exhibit C-1.)
  - a. **Purpose.** The purposes of the form are:
    - # To report any condition, observance, act, maintenance problem, or circumstance which has potential to cause an aviation related accident.
    - # To document all aviation hazards, incidents, incidents with potential, or accidents.
    - # To perform trend analyses for short- or long-term changes in policy and procedures, identify areas needing training, etc.;
    - # To establish accountability on the part of all aviation mission participants for meeting flight and employee safety objectives.
  - b. **Applicability.** The form is to be completed for any one of the four occurrences: Aviation Hazard, Incident, Incident With Potential, or Accident.
  - c. **Responsibility and Requirements For Completion.** The responsible employee shall document the facts and immediately file the report with his/her supervisor. Regions shall immediately report by telephone all aviation accidents or incidents with potential to the National Aviation Safety Officer.
  - d. **Instructions For Completion.** See Exhibit C-1. Completion is self-explanatory.
  - e. **Routing, Filing And/Or Action Necessary.**
    - (1) **Reporting.** Each individual and each organization has an obligation to others in aviation to share hazard, mishap and causal information. Each unit's aviation accident prevention plan should therefore contain provisions for encouraging the reporting of such information by individuals. The information is documented and processed for system-wide distribution.

## INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE

### Appendix C - Emergency Response And Incident, Hazard, and Accident Reporting

- (2) **Timeframes.** Copies are routed to the Regional Aviation Safety Manager and Forest Aviation Officer as soon as possible. Accidents and incidents with potential are to be reported immediately.
3. **State And Local Agency Reports.** Reference local formats. Federal personnel managing helibases or engaging in helicopter missions for state or local agencies should complete the state or local format. If none exists, complete a **Safecom OAS-34 (FS 5700-14)** and submit to the local unit Aviation Manager.

